



U.S. Department of Justice

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PRESS RELEASE

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Arkansas man arrested after traveling to Washington, D.C. to have sex with 10-and 11-year-old children during on-line undercover operation

Washington, D.C. - A 63-year-old Arkansas man, Aubrey Lynn Shepard, has been arrested during an on-line undercover operation in which the defendant traveled to the District of Columbia from Arkansas to have sex with 10- and 11-year-old children, announced U.S. Attorney Jeffrey A. Taylor, FBI Assistant Director in Charge Joseph Persichini, Jr., Washington Field Office, and Metropolitan Police Department Chief Cathy Lanier today.

Shepard, 63, of Benton, Arkansas, was arrested yesterday by members of the Metropolitan Police Department's Crimes Against Children Task Force and the FBI's Innocent Images Unit following his indictment on Transportation of Child Pornography, Attempted Enticement of a Minor Child, and Attempted Exploitation of a Minor Child charges. Today, Shepard appeared before U.S. Magistrate Judge Deborah Robinson in the U.S. District for the District of Columbia, where he was arraigned on the charges. If convicted, Shepard faces a possible sentence of 35 years to life imprisonment.

"Nothing we do is more important than protecting our children from sexual predators," stated U.S. Attorney Taylor. "The shocking allegations in this case demonstrate the depravity of some individuals and serves as a reminder for parents to monitor and caution their children about the dangers of the Internet. With our law enforcement partners, we will continue to be aggressive and vigilant in bringing to justice those individuals who seek to harm our children."

"I wish to commend all those members who did an outstanding job in this case," said MPD Chief Lanier. "I would add my voice with U.S. Attorney Taylor and remind parents to monitor their child's use of computers and I wish assure all parents that the Metropolitan Police Department will continue to pursue those who would threaten the safety of our children."

"Ensuring the safety and security of our children depends upon the combined efforts of law enforcement, parents, school administrators and staff and the media," stated FBI Assistant Director in Charge Persichini. "The FBI remains committed to working with all members of our community to achieve that goal."

Shepard's arrest follows a month-and-a-half-long investigation by the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). The case was initiated when an

MPD detective working on-line in an undercover capacity, entered a public chat-room and observed a message posted by a then-unidentified individual using the screen name, "hornyoldman." The message asked whether there was any parent with a young daughter willing to share her with "a horny old man." The detective, posing as a pedophile, and Shepard then began communicating in a private chat-room. Almost immediately, Shepard allegedly inquired whether the detective had access to a girl under the age of 12. When the detective indicated that he had engaged in sex with a 10-year-old for money, Shepard allegedly indicated that he was interested in and offered money in exchange for sex with the fictitious girl.

The detective and Shepard engaged in on-line chats during March and early April 2007. In the conversations, Shepard allegedly stated that he also wanted to engage in sexual activity with the detective's fictitious 11-year-old daughter. When the detective expressed concern that the child would tell her mother, Shepard allegedly suggested giving the child sleeping pills in order to render her unconscious during the sexual activity. During the on-line conversations, Shepard allegedly sent via the Internet numerous images, including videos of child pornography, to the detective in the District of Columbia.

Shepard arranged with the detective for Shepard to travel from Arkansas to the District of Columbia allegedly in order to engage in sex with the two fictitious children. He reserved a room at a motel in Northeast Washington where he intended to meet the detective and the children. Shepard allegedly indicated that he would bring a camera to videotape the sexual activity, child pornography to show the children, as well as the sleeping pills and stuffed animals.

Shepard drove from Benton, Arkansas to the District of Columbia, arriving at the motel at approximately 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, April 3, 2007. He was placed under arrest after exiting his vehicle. A video camera, a large amount of child pornography, and stuffed animals were recovered in a preliminary search of his car. Shepard had approximately five hundred dollars in cash on his person.

Immediately after Shepard's arrest in the District, FBI agents executed a search warrant on his residence in Arkansas. Two computers and other evidence related to the investigation were seized during the search.

This case is being brought as part of Project Safe Childhood. In February 2006, Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales created Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative designed to protect children from online exploitation and abuse. Led by the U.S. Attorney's Offices, Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state and local resources to better locate, apprehend, and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, as well as identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.projectsafechildhood.gov/.

In announcing the arrest and indictment, U.S. Attorney Taylor, Assistant Director in Charge Persichini, and Chief Lanier praised the outstanding work of MPD Detectives Timothy Palchak, Miguel Miranda, Jonathan Andrews, Sgt. Morani Hines and FBI Special Agents Jill Blackman, Scott Schelbe, and Chad Gallagher. In addition he thanked FBI agents of the Little Rock Arkansas field

office, and the U.S. Attorney's Office in Little Rock for their assistance, and praised the work of legal assistant Phaylyn Hunt for her support in the investigation. Finally they commended Assistant U.S. Attorneys Donnell Turner and Patricia Stewart, who are prosecuting the case.

An indictment is merely a formal charge that a defendant has committed a criminal violation. All defendants are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty in a court of law.

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